

Q-1 Critically examine the political strategy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan for the protection of muslim interest in British India. How did his approach differs from the methods adopted by Indian National Congress.

Introduction:

The war of independence in 1857 was a major turning point for the muslims of Indian Subcontinent. This war proved to be Catastrophic for the muslims because the Britishers started to believe that Muslims were responsible for the Brits anti-British rebellion. Therefore, they imposed punishment and persecution on Muslims. In this dark hour, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan emerged as a "messiah" for the Muslims of Subcontinent. His political strategy for the protection of Muslim interest in the Subcontinent was Centred on educational empowerment and reapproachment with British. This strategy was adopted by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to safeguard the interest of muslims against both Colonial hostility and the rising political dominance of Hind majority.

1 Political Strategy of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan:

Sir Syed Ahmad perceived that

if the tensions between Muslims and ~~British~~ Continued, Hindus would get advantage of it. He believed that the survival of Muslims depended on ending British-Muslim animosity. To alleviate the tensions, he wrote a pamphlet named "Essay on the Causes of the Indian Revolt". In this pamphlet he proved that Muslims were not responsible for the revolt of 1857. Through "The Loyal Muhammadans of India", he described the sincere services of Muslims of India to the British government to soften the British stance.

Educational Empowerment:

"Sir Syed Ahmad was neither a politician nor a political leader. He was essentially a social reformer and his panacea for all the ill of his community were education."

(Hafeez Malik)

Sir Syed famously argued that "the sword is replaced by the pen." He believed that without modern western education, Muslims could not get out of the miserable condition. So, he started a mission for educating the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Farsi Madrasa Muradabad:

Sir Syed started

his educational struggle with the establishment of Farsi Madrasa for the Muslims in 1859.

Scientific Society:

Sir Syed established the Scientific Society in 1864. The objective of Scientific Society was:

- 1- To translate educational and technical literature from English language to Indian languages.
- 2- To publish rarely available books by Indian writers

Muhammadian Anglo Orientation (MAO) College, Aligarh:

It was inaugurated in 1877. It soon became the centre of Muslim education and intellectual activity. It produced a class of Muslims who were capable of competing for government job.

Aligarh University (1920):

It was established on December 4, 1920. This university inculcated the spirit of nationalism in Muslims. It produced thousands of Muslim graduates which carried the spirit of nationalism to every corner of the subcontinent.

3- Two Nation Theory:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan preached two nation theory which was the axis of his political thought. Muslims realised that they can not live together with Hindus and that is why they demanded electorate. When they realised that their future in 'Democratic India' dominated by Hindus, was not safe, they presented the demand for separate state. At a speech, On March 16, 1888, he referred Muslim-Hindu as two warring nation who could not lead a common political life if ever Britishers left India.

According to him Islam is distinctly separate from other religion. Unlike Hinduism, Islam does not teach separatism. ~~Which~~ This ultimately provided with the idea that Muslims can't live Hindus. So, they demanded separate state.

Approach adopted by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The approach adopted by Sir Syed Ahmad was quite different from Indian National Congress in many aspects.

Two nation Theory:

Indian National Congress (INC), promoted the idea of territorial nationalism, asserting that everyone living

in India belongs to one Indian nation regardless of the religion. Unlike INC, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan presented the two nation theory following the Hindi-Urdu Controversy in 1867, believing that Muslims are separate nation and can't live together with Hindus.

Educational Empowerment

The Sir Syed Ahmad Khan focussed on empowering Muslims with modern education to revive to lost dignity of Muslims while INC prioritized politics believing that political freedom is necessary for other reforms.

Rejection of democracy:

INC was in favor of "one man, one vote" while, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was against democracy because Muslims were in minority.

Democracy would mean that there would be permanent Hindu rule over the Muslim minority.

Conclusion:

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's political strategy saved the Muslims from annihilation. His struggle saved the Muslims from British persecution, by choosing education over agitation and loyalty over confrontation. He

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laid the political and intellectual foundations of Muslim nationalism in the Subcontinent.

He presented the two nation Theory which laid the foundation of Pakistan.